

**CALFED Ecosystem Roundtable Meeting Notes
December 11, 1998**

Roundtable members (or their representatives) and Liaisons present:

Greg Gartrell (CCWD)
Gary Bobker (The Bay Institute)
Dan Keppen (NCWA)
Hari Modi (NCPA)
Jason Peltier (CVPWA)
David Yardas (EDF)
Tom Zuckerman (CDWA)
Steve Hirsch (MWD)
Bill Gaines (CWA)
John Mills (RCRC)
Carolyn Yale (EPA)
Patrick Leonard (FWS)

Future meeting date:

Wednesday, February 3, 09:30 to 3:30

Action Plan Overview

The Integration Panel met on December 1-3, and developed a set of recommendations for the FY 99 Action Plan. The preliminary draft of the Action Plan was presented to the Roundtable. It includes 13 designated actions with a cost estimate of \$55 million, plus-or-minus 20%, and 17 focused proposal solicitation actions, with 2 actions to confirm with other programs (Saeltzer Dam and Daguerre Dam). A general solicitation is also anticipated. The Action Plan will be discussed at the CALFED Policy Group meeting next week.

One of the documents used in developing the FY 99 Action Plan was a matrix of all projects funded to date by CALFED, California Urban Water Agencies, CVPIA Anadromous Fish Restoration Program, and from several other funding sources. Several suggestions were made concerning additional information that would make the matrix more useful such as percent completed (funding and status of the projects), the year the project was approved, etc.

FY99 Available Funding

The Roundtable was presented a chart that displayed funding that was still available for FY99. Total amount available, including the FY 98 Environmental Water Acquisition Program funds, is approximately \$83 million.

Questions were raised concerning what percentage of funds for approved projects have been spent so far. Information was requested showing expected expenditures over the next few years for previously approved projects

Designated Actions

For the identified Designated Actions, there is no guarantee of funding. Completed project information will be available January 15th, with Integration Panel review of those proposals January 20th and 22nd. Roundtable, Policy Group review and Secretary approval will follow.

Information requested about designated actions included a statement of biological benefits. This was a question also raised by the Core Team members who reviewed the Action Plan. Additional detail was also requested about local involvement and support. This information would also be requested as part of the next proposal solicitation

to identify the level of local support for projects. Other requested information included more detail on monitoring and assessment.

Proposal Solicitation

The proposal solicitation is expected to be issued in mid-February, with applications due in mid-April, which would result in funding decisions in late June or July 1999. The proposal solicitation will include the 17 focused actions as well as a general solicitation for other beneficial actions in eight different topic areas.

Permitting

A Roundtable member voiced concern about county personnel having to sit down with several previously approved project sponsors to discuss local regulatory requirements. Another member stated that requesting information from applicants on permits that they anticipate needing could be useful in evaluating the proposals.

Core Team Member Preliminary Recommendations

A couple members of the Core Team provided preliminary input on the Integration Panel recommendations. A member asked about the role of the Core Team. They were informed that there were six members who helped write the ERP Strategic Plan and two were available to review the FY 99 Action Plan. A continuing role in the development of the FY 99 Action Plan for the Core Team members was discussed.

The Roundtable was asked whether they felt the Integration Panel recommendations were headed in the right direction. One member stated that they liked the "directed actions approach," and that it "creates an incentive to get the act together."

Questions that were raised included:

What is the relationship between the Roundtable and Integration Panel? Does the "direct and focused" approach lend itself to better integration with CVPIA, and can we have better programmatic integration information at January's Roundtable meeting? Integration is a topic of continual discussion between CALFED and CVPIA.

In addition, the connection of these recommendations and the Draft ERP Stage 1 Actions was raised. One member had concerns about "too many blueprints", and asked which one is best to follow.

Cindy Darling stated that there were two activities that needed to continue: 1) the transition from early implementation to the long-term program; and 2) the FY 00 budget process (integration of CVPIA process).

Specific Comments on Integration Panel Recommendations

Battle Creek

It was indicated that there are still two proposals on the table, and there is a meeting next Thursday. Positions and deadlines are known. It was asked if Eagle Canyon merits were brought up biologically. It was stated that the Integration Panel said it would prefer a proposal that emphasized removal of dams. For the action involving work on a weir at Coleman Fish Hatchery, it was asked why that action was not funded by CVPIA. This question will be answered in the proposal for that action.

Butte Creek

A solution is to be identified by the operators, with an estimated \$750K as a cost share. It may be a little lower, but that will be seen in January. Ducks Unlimited is working on the project with local landowners.

McCormack-Williamson

It was stated that locals want flood control covered before any restoration is begun. Revenue and costs are being looked at with Mike Eaton of The Nature Conservancy. Some concern was raised about use of restoration funds

for operations and maintenance. This issue will be worked out with the parties involved.

Georgiana Slough

Do we want the fish to "hang out" or "move up?" Do we enhance the habitat? Someone stated that the action needs to be redescribed so that there is better information.

Channel Islands

There was a correction to the chart. The current project is in the Central Delta.

Suisun Marsh

A Roundtable member stated that there is some confusion about levee restoration and the Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP). The ERP discusses tidal wetlands, and there is overlap. Another member felt that there should be coordination between screening activities and the existing Biological Opinion for Suisun Marsh. This issue is being discussed by the Policy Group.

General Screening in Delta

It was asked if there are landowners who would let their diversions be used for testing.

Prospect Island

The Integration Panel wants to use the opportunity for aquatic monitoring. They stated that this is an excellent learning laboratory, and felt it was a good investment in relation to the Strategic Plan. It was noted that this effort should be coordinated with the North Delta Refuge process.

Frank's Tract

One member noted an interest in seeing a cost share for dredge material if used.

Tuolumne River

The easement applications are still pending. The property is staying in private ownership, and will be restored to natural habitat. A Roundtable member requested additional information about the specific terms for the easements. Those should be explained in the full proposal.

ACID Fish Screens

This is a CVPIA line item. Funding for construction is not in this years CVPIA budget and the Integration Panel felt it was important to take action this year, if possible. A Roundtable member asked why CVPIA is not funding this project. It is in the CVPIA 5-year budget for funding in 2002. A description of previous funding was requested and one member noted that local involvement on this project will be critical.

Yuba River

Concern was raised over this action being characterized as a feasibility study for removing Daguerre Point Dam. Cindy Darling stated that the focus of this action is on determining the status of an already approved Army Corps of Engineers planning study. No additional action is proposed at this time.

Water Quality

There are numerous water quality actions recommended with a goal to focus on solutions, bring other studies together, and avoid duplication of effort. The Roundtable felt it was important to look at the big picture.

Introduced Species

This issue will be put in the next PSP. This is specific to aquatic and riparian plant issues.

Letter to Lester RE: Project Reporting System

Hari Modi and Tom Zuckerman wanted to ascertain the level of support of the rest of the Roundtable for the Project Report System they helped developed. The Roundtable stated its support for these efforts.

Special Support Programs - Steve Ritchie

Steve Ritchie presented a proposal for funding for Special Support Programs. He also briefly discussed overall CALFED budget issues. Roundtable members requested additional time and discussion on both topics. Steve stated that he would be open to discussion, and that he would schedule a conference call with a subset of the Roundtable to discuss.

Outreach for Sacramento River Acquisitions presentation

CALFED previously funded The Nature Conservancy, Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wildlife Conservation Board for acquisition and restoration along the mainstem of the Sacramento River. The Recipient Agreement with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is close to completion. No acquisitions have taken place, but there should be soon. The Recipient Agreement will provide for quarterly reports to CALFED.

A Roundtable member had a concern about what kinds of efforts are being made on the overall hydraulics of the river (meander, insurance maps, etc.). Are we concerned about the neighbors of the willing sellers? Is this core study answering the framework? It was noted that there is a side-by-side effort with the neighbors. They are trying to come up with an endowment for protections. To date, there is no endowment.

One of the presenters stated that if there is bank protection to be maintained, it would go into the analysis. For all actions taken, detailed analysis will occur on a site specific basis.